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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001324

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALY UNCERTAIN LISTING TAMIL TIGERS WILL PROMOTE
PEACE

REF: STATE 65395

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Jonathan Cohen for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Poloff discussed Ref demarche on May 3 with the MFA's Enrico Valvo of the counter-terrorism office and Giuseppe Cinti, South Asian Office Director. Both officials fully agreed that the suicide bombing last month was an abhorrent escalation and said Italy would continue denouncing all forms of violence that aim to achieve some political goal. Valvo said that "technically" the LTTE could be considered a terrorist group but Italy is unsure that listing them at the EU level now would be wise or appropriate. In any case, Valvo acknowledged, the listing process within the EU requires unanimity and there were certain countries who were not willing to go along at this time.

2. (C) Cinti condemned the attack last month but struck a more philosophical tone on listing the LTTE. He said that the EU must take stock of the situation and calculate whether listing the group should be a "first step" or a "final step" in the process. If the LTTE had earned any credibility by signaling a willingness to talk peace, it is squandering it by not renouncing violent tactics. There are ample ways to reach a negotiated solution using the political process, he said, and the international community should push both sides back to the table. If the LTTE continues to rely on violence and intimidation, then perhaps listing them as a terrorist group would be an appropriate final step.
SPOGLI